



Reporting Committee	Emergency Ambulance Services Committee
Chaired by	Chris Turner
Lead Executive Directors	Health Board Chief Executives
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Date of last meeting	12 May2020

Summary of key matters including achievements and progress considered by the Committee and any related decisions made.

An electronic link to the papers considered by the EAS Joint Committee is provided via the following link: <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/easc/may-2020>

Chris Turner (Chair), welcomed Members to the first virtual meeting (using the Skype platform) of the Emergency Ambulance Services Committee.

Prior to the presentation of the provider report, the Chair formally thanked Jason Killens and all of the staff at WAST for their excellent response to the Covid 19 Pandemic.

The Chair also thanked the Chief Executives of health boards and their staff for their exceptional work and commitment in responding so well to the unprecedented situation. Members expressed their sincere sympathies and condolences to the families, friends and colleagues at WAST and those in the wider health service who had died during the time of this pandemic.

CHIEF AMBULANCE SERVICES COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Stephen Harray presented an update on the following areas:

- **Year End Accounts** – Members noted that the draft year end accounts had been received and there were no problems or risks anticipated with finalising and submitting to the Audit and Risk Committee at Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB in June 2020.
- **Ministerial Ambulance Availability Task Force** – Members noted that the plans for the Taskforce were currently on hold and the Minister had been informed. Consideration would be given when the work would formally recommence.
- **Annual Governance Statement** – Members noted that this was in the drafting stage and would be submitted to the Audit and Risk Committee at Cwm Taf Morgannwg in June 2020.
- **Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service (EMRTS)** – Members noted the work to develop the commissioning framework and the work to develop 24/7 working. The EMRTS Delivery Assurance Group would discuss and develop detailed operational plans for approval at a future Committee meeting.
- **EASC Integrated Medium Term Plan (IMTP)** – Members noted that a letter of support had been received from the Welsh Government for the EASC IMTP although the planning processes were now on hold.

- **Co-Chair Task and Finish Group** – Members were reminded that the CASC had been asked to work with the fire and rescue service; this work had been put on hold. Further information would be shared when available.
- **Ambulance Quality Indicators (AQIs)** – Members noted that performance targets were on hold, although data continued to be collected; Stats Wales had paused the publication of the AQIs.
- **Meetings with WAST** – Members noted that the CASC had a weekly meetings with the Chief Executive of WAST. A Quality and Delivery meeting was held last week and the CASC reported that progress was being made.
- **EASC Management Group** - Members noted that the Group would recommence shortly and would work on developing the 'new normal' in line with the requirements of the operating framework.
- **Covid response** – Members noted that the CASC and the EASC teams had continued to work closely with WAST and commended the positive way in which the WAST Executive Team and all of the staff had responded to the pandemic. Members noted that in terms of the additional expenditure related to the pandemic response, this was being monitored and this would not be the responsibility of health boards to fund. Members noted that the importance of the revised financial plan and clarification of the additional expenditure incurred by WAST.

PROVIDER ISSUES

The update report from the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) was received and in presenting the report Jason Killens highlighted key areas which included:

Pandemic and response

- Members noted that the team at WAST had aimed to double their capacity across key operational areas. Areas highlighted included
 - the 111 service which had seen a 350% increase in the number of calls received, additional staff had been recruited and the online symptom checker was operational.
 - More call handling capacity had been developed in Swansea and Cwmbran (2) with the potential to open an area in North Wales if required. This approach allowed safe working practices, conforming to social distancing rules, to operate in call centres.
 - The surge in activity over the most recent weekend which saw the highest peak in activity over the last 3 months.
 - 999: capacity had been doubled.
 - Emergency Medical Services: the limiting factor was the availability of vehicles.
 - Workforce issues: weekly overtime had doubled, support had been received from the military and underlying sickness absence had reduced.
 - Performance: good outturn performance at over 65% across Wales in April and also expected in May.
 - Non-emergency patient transport services had been maintained for renal and oncology patients.

Activity and performance

- Amber performance had improved from the beginning of the financial year, activity reduced, production and lost hours had all contributed which was the best position for a number of years.

Demand and Capacity Review - Implementation progress

Overview of the work to date was provided which included:

- Members noted that WAST had also retained this review as priority work during the Covid 19 pandemic response.
- Aim to recruit a net additional 136 WTE staff and the majority would be emergency medical technicians (EMT).
- Undertaken virtual recruitment events and virtual online training courses.
- Had already secured 40.28 WTE staff required and were also aiming to over-recruit the numbers of paramedics due to some slippage in the programme.
- Members noted that the Demand and Capacity Review was undertaken across NHS Wales and did not include the anticipated changes as a result of the Grange University Hospital opening.
- Members noted that other developments and plans were on hold (apart from the work with the Grange Hospital).

Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS)

- Members noted that work was continuing to improve the national booking process.
- The Demand and Capacity Review of NEPTS had now been reconvened and was being managed through the NEPTS Delivery Assurance Group.

WAST Integrated Medium Term Plan (IMTP)

- Members noted that the WAST Board had approved the IMTP and a letter in support had been sent by the CASC although the planning processes had been put on hold by the Welsh Government.
- Members noted that WAST would respond to the new operating framework and intended to submit on 18 May.

Regional Escalation

- Members noted that this process had been disrupted due to the response required for the Covid 19 pandemic.
- The WAST team suggested that it would need to continue to refine plans for the previously agreed revised regional escalation process in the future to weave in learning and management of activity due to the impact of the pandemic.

In receiving and noting the WAST provider report Members highlighted:

- The excellent progress made with the recruitment of staff and asked whether health boards also searching for additional staff had impacted on WAST. A further opportunity to discuss recruitment, for example of paramedics, across NHS Wales would be considered.
- Performance issues - in terms of the improving trend but also of the variation in performance across Wales.
- The Amber performance was positive.
- Further discussions would need to take place in relation to how the extra resources (136WTE staff) would be deployed.
- The additional capacity in the transfer and discharge service and plans for the medium and long term which was encouraging.
- The impact on WAST staff during the pandemic and the challenges faced; Jason Killens explained that efforts were being made to capture the learning and not lose the agile way in which staff were responding.

- Matters relating to personal protective equipment (PPE) and the impact in relation to the time taken to respond to incidents. The issue remained on aerosol generating procedures and cardiac arrest in relation to the type of PPE used.
- Additional information was sought regarding performance and the possibility that due to the reduction in demand coupled with increased production that this would impact more on red performance.
- The evaluation of winter was raised and the work to do in planning for the next winter period alongside the Covid 19 impact. It was suggested and agreed that it would be helpful to undertake more planning than normal to ensure the NHS would be able to respond effectively. Members noted that WAST would increase the ambulance fleet by 100 new vehicles but would retain the older vehicles for an additional 12 months to ensure a contingency for the fleet.
- Additional staff were also trained and available such as the Fire and Rescue service staff. The impact of the winter in the Southern Hemisphere would also be monitored and WAST were keen to work closely with Health Boards in taking this work forward.

Key risks and issues/matters of concern and any mitigating actions

- Handover delays and red performance
- WAST staff recruitment

Matters requiring Board level consideration and/or approval

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Forward Work Programme

Considered and agreed by the Committee.

Committee minutes submitted	Yes	√	No	
Date of next meeting	14 July 2020			